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ABSTRACT

Noting that there exists little systematic and conclusive research on after-school education to guide the development of practices in this emerging field, this book contributes to the definition of after-school education by focusing on three essential aspects of such programming: (1) bridging school to after-school (2) homework, or extended learning; and (3) curricula, or enriched learning. The book draws on several types of data sources, including interviews with leaders in the field and program directors, research studies, policy briefs and theoretical papers, volunteer questionnaires, and experiences in demonstration sites. Following introductory remarks on the nature of learning in after-school programs, Chapter 1 deals with linking after-school programs to the school day, and provides a rationale for having the different realms of learning reinforce one another, elaborates on various approaches to bridging, and recommends specific steps to improve bridging conditions. Chapter 2 considers the place of homework in after-school programs, describes the patterns of homework practices found, reviews challenges cited in interviews, and offers specific recommendations for improving homework practices. Chapter 3 reviews the nature and importance of learning in after-school settings, discussing patterns of curricular practices, summarizing challenges in this area, and offering recommendations for effecting better enriched learning in afterschool programs. The book's three appendices provide information on the context in which this research was conducted, statistics about the Boston and Cambridge communities, and a list of individuals interviewed for the report. The appendices are followed by six related commentaries, as follows: (1) "Globalizaion and the Democratic Space: Why What Happens After School Matters" ((Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco); (2) "Afterschool Education: A Global Perspective" (Reed Larson); (3) "Comments on Afterschool Programs: Bridging the School Day" (Adriana de Kanter); (4) "Bridging Schools and Afterschool Programs" (Sam Piha); (5) "Supporting Children's Homework Assignments in Afterschool Programs" (Harris Cooper); and (6) "Affirming Culture and Building Citizenship through Afterschool Curricula" (Maria del Pilar O'Cadiz). (Contains 73 references.) (KB)

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